America and Her Children

A Program for use in Congregational Sunday Schools in connection with the Missionary Education Chart plan for July 1921.

Issued by The Congregational Home Missionary Society
through the Missionary Education Department
of the Congregational Education Society.

The Congregational Home Missionary Society
287 Fourth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

SUGGESTIONS ON THE USE OF THIS PROGRAM

The January program of the Congregational Home Missionary Society presented an outstanding phase of its rural work, under the title: Serving the Rural Community. In this program is presented an important contribution of city missions to Americanization. The program centers about the work of the Italian Evangelical Church of the Redeemer, in Brooklyn, New York. A leaflet describing the organization and its work is furnished with the program. This leaflet should be given to the person taking the part of C. H. M. S. and by her handed to America at the point indicated in the text.

The work of this church is typical of that carried on by many similar mission stations elsewhere. A list of leaflets describing some of these is given at the end of the program.

The Characters. AMERICA: a young woman, wearing a red, white, and blue sash or with a small U. S. flag fastened to her dress.

CHMS (Congregational Home Missionary Society): A young woman with the letters C H M S lettered on a placard or cut out and fastened on her dress. If America wears the U. S. flag it will be appropriate for CHMS to wear the Christian flag.

IMMIGRANT WOMAN: wearing a dark dress with an old shawl over her head. Should walk bowed over like an old woman.

CARLO: A boy of high school age in ordinary costume. Represents an Italian boy but need not necessarily attempt to imitate the Italian brogue as he is supposed to have had some education in this country.

Two copies of the program are furnished to each school, one for AMERICA and one for CHMS. The parts for the IMMIGRANT WOMAN and CARLO are printed on a separate sheet for each. The lines in italics are the cue sentences showing where the part should come in.

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America and Her Children

1. **Song.** "America."

2. **Scripture Lesson.** Isaiah 11 : 1-5, 10.

Leader. The prophets often reminded their people that God had chosen them to be a blessing to all the nations of earth. This is true of every favored nation. It is particularly true of America. God has blessed this nation richly. If we are to be truly great it must be in the greatness of our gift to all the peoples of earth. The program that is to follow will suggest one way in which we can pass on the blessings we have received.

3. **Dramatization.** Enter *America* (right), CHMS (left). America looks troubled.

CHMS. My dear America, what makes you look so worried?

America. I have troubles enough to worry me, goodness knows.

CHMS. But why? You are rich, you are comfortable. You are very well off compared to some I know.

America. Oh, yes, I suppose so; but I have so many children to look after and, like the old woman who lived in a shoe, there are times when I don't know what to do either.

CHMS. And what have the children been doing to trouble you now?

America. Well, they don't seem to get on very well together. I can't get some of them to talk properly and they just jabber at one another and do not understand each other at all.

CHMS. You *have* rather a mixed family.

America. I should say I have! It's not just my own but there are so many that keep coming and asking me to adopt them. Why, there were more than 400,000 last year alone.

CHMS. It's good of you to take them all in and most of them seem to appreciate it.

America. Oh, yes, I know, but some of them are a terrible responsibility.

CHMS. Well, you know, they have their troubles too.

America. What do you mean? I am sure they are much better off with me than they were at home.

CHMS. That may be true enough, but it is no easy thing to leave one's own home and old friends and cross the sea to live among strangers in a new land.

America. (Thoughtfully) Yes, I suppose that is true.

CHMS. And then, you must remember, my dear America, that some of your own children are not always considerate of their new brothers and sisters.

America. Why, what do you mean?

CHMS. Suppose I let some of your new children answer that question for themselves. (Goes to meet Immigrant Woman who enters at left. Takes her by the hand and leads her toward America) Here is one of them. Let her tell you of her welcome here.

America. Yes, my daughter, tell me about it.

Immigrant Woman. Oh, it's all right now. But it would have been bad for me if the kind lady had not been there.

America. What kind lady? What was the matter?

Immigrant Woman. My son, he send for me to come to this country. He send me ticket and a little money. It was hard journey. The boat rock and that place where we were, it smell so. Oh, but I was sick! My son write that he meet me at the dock and then he take care of me. My! how glad I was to see the land. But my son, he not there. I don't know what to do. I have no money left. The man tell me that I cannot come here with no money and nobody to look

AMERICA AND HER CHILDREN

Parts for characters of Immigrant Woman and Carlo to accompany Congregational Home Missionary program. Separate on scored lines and give to persons taking these two parts.

IMMIGRANT WOMAN

The lines in italics are the cue sentences. Watch for these and speak your part immediately following them.

CHMS. *Suppose I let some of your new children answer that question for themselves.* (Goes to meet Immigrant Woman, who enters at left. Takes her by the hand and leads her toward America). *Here is one of them. Let her tell you of her welcome here.*

America. *Yes, my daughter, tell me about it.*

Immigrant Woman. Oh, it's all right now. But it would have been bad for me if the kind lady had not been there.

America. *What kind lady? What was the matter?*

Immigrant Woman. My son, he send for me to come to this country. He send me ticket and a little money. It was hard journey. The boat rock and that place where we were, it smell so. Oh, but I was sick! My son write that he meet me at the dock and then he take care of me. My! how glad I was to see the land. But my son, he not there. I don't know what to do. I have no money left. The man tell me that I cannot come here with no money and nobody to look after me. He tell me I must go back. I was scared. I cry. Then the good lady come and she talk with me. She fix it all right. Oh, I thank the good God every day for the lady.

The lines in italics are the cue sentences. Watch for these and speak your part immediately following them.

CHMS. *Now, let me introduce another.* (Turns to meet a young Italian boy, Carlo by name, who enters from left. Leads him toward America, saying) *This is Carlo, another of your adopted children.*

America. *Well, my boy, what have you to tell me? Do you like it here in America?*

Carlo. I do now. I didn't before Mr. Lisi found me. (Lisi pronounced Lee'-see.)

America. *And where did he find you?*

Carlo. My father brought my mother and me here. He worked for a padrone. He cheated my father and we nearly starved. Then he sent my father out to a railway camp to work and he was killed in an accident there. My mother was not well and my father's death killed her too.

I was just a little chap and a man said he would take care of me and give me work. I worked all right. I had to go out with a man to pick up rags and junk. The padrone took the stuff and sold it and gave us just enough to keep alive on. We slept in a dirty old cellar with rats in it. If we didn't bring in enough to suit him, he would beat us. He beat me the most because I was just a kid.

America. *That was a pretty hard life. How did you get away?*

Carlo. Well, one day I ran away. I knew the padrone might kill me if he caught me, but I didn't care. I would as soon have been killed as to live that way any longer. I hid in the alleys and ate what I could pick up out of garbage boxes and then, just when I thought I would die anyhow, Mr. Lisi found me.

(America and CHMS carry on a short conversation here about the work of Mr. Lisi and the Church of the Redeemer and other similar mission work).

America. *What are you doing now, Carlo?*

Carlo. I am working in an office daytimes and going to school at night. I am saving my money and hope soon to go to the American-International College at Springfield. I would like to be a missionary like Mr. Lisi and help other fellows the way he helped me.

after me. He tell me I must go back. I was scared. I cry. Then the good lady come and she talk with me. She fix it all right. Oh, I thank the good God every day for the lady.

America. (To CHMS) Who is this "kind lady"? Do you know?

CHMS. Yes, she means Mrs. Beharian, who represents the Congregational Home Missionary Society and the New York State Conference at Ellis Island. This Italian woman's son had been hurt in an accident that morning and had been sent to the hospital. That is why he was not there to meet his mother. You can imagine her distress. Mrs. Beharian looked up the young man's employers, then went to the hospital to tell him that his mother was all right. She went back and convinced the immigration inspectors that the woman's story was true and that her son could take care of her. Then she looked after both of them until the son was able to be out again.

America. That was fine. Are there many such cases?

CHMS. Yes, indeed. There are thousands of such women. They have different kinds of trouble, but most of them need help. Mrs. Beharian spends all her time at the immigrant station. She looks out for mothers who have had a hard time on the journey and helps them care for their children. She washes the babies and if their clothing is too badly worn or soiled to use again, she gives them new clothing that has been sent on by people in the churches all over the country. Mrs. Beharian is an Armenian herself, and speaks that language and Turkish, but she knows all the other members of the Home Missionary staff and can always find some one who speaks the language of whatever person she is trying to help.

America. That certainly is good work.

CHMS. Now, let me introduce another. (Turns to meet a young Italian boy, Carlo by name, who enters from left. Leads him toward America saying) This is Carlo, another of your adopted children.

America. Well, my boy, what have you to tell me? Do you like it here in America?

Carlo. I do now. I didn't before Mr. Lisi found me. (Lisi pronounced Lee'-see.)

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America. (To CHMS) Do you know this Mr. Lisi?

CHMS. Yes, he is one of our Congregational city missionaries. He found Carlo hunting through a pile of refuse for something to eat. The lad was so afraid that Mr. Lisi would take him back to the padrone that it was hard to get his story. Mr. Lisi took him over to the Italian Church of the Redeemer, fed him and gave him some decent clothes, then found a home for him and sent him to school.

America. What is this Church of the Redeemer?

CHMS. (Handling America the leaflet "Chiesa Italiana del Redentore") Oh, you ought to know about that. This leaflet will tell you about it. It is a church which I am helping the Italian people to maintain in Brooklyn. Carlo found here a fine room with games and books and baths and a lot of other Italian boys who could speak his language. They gave him a fine welcome, invited him to their Sunday school class and to the church service and made him feel at home immediately.

They told him that his new friend, Mr. Lisi, had fought in the war for ten months and had been twice wounded.

America. A brave man as well as a kindly one. Are you helping any more of my adopted children besides the Italians?

CHMS. Yes indeed. There are nearly four hundred churches in the United States in which services are conducted in twenty different languages. Congregationalists in every part of the country are giving money to help carry on this work. If you want to know about some of these others just write to my office at 287 Fourth Avenue, New York City, and I will be glad to send you leaflets telling about them.

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America. Well, you certainly ought to have the chance.

CHMS. I am going to see that he gets it and that a lot of other boys and girls do too, if the young folks of our Sunday schools will help me.

America. I am sure they will be glad to. Why, you are making real Americans out of these new children of mine.

CHMS. I hope so. Did it ever occur to you that I am trying to help your own children to be *real* Americans too? You know that song about our Pilgrim Fathers, that says:

> "Laws, freedom, truth, and faith in God;
> Came with those exiles o'er the waves"—

When I think of your young folks with all their chances for education and their powers of helpfulness, and then see these new children so eager and hopeful and yet with so much to overcome—what a chance to help!

America. (Very thoughtfully) It surely is. (Reaches out her hand and takes that of CHMS with a hearty grasp) And I thank you for helping me to see it so clearly. That makes me think of something. Every July my children celebrate my birthday. I wish they would give me as a birthday present their promise to help one another: every one of them, my own and my adopted children too.

CHMS. That would be a splendid present. And I can tell them just how and where some of them could help. We need many more strong, well-trained young men and women as

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America. (Lifting her head proudly and speaking very earnestly) Of course they will. So many of them fought for me. (More gently) Some of them died for me. Surely they will live for me. How can they do that better than by working and giving for others in Christ's name.

4. Song. "America the Beautiful."

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